

METHOD WHICH USES A NON-VOLATILE MEMORY TO STORE

A CRYPTO KEY AND A CHECK WORD FOR AN ENCRYPTION DEVICE

This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/505,830, filed February 17, 2000.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates generally to a non-volatile memory interface for use with an encryption device. More particularly, the present invention relates to a method which uses a Non-Volatile Memory circuit connected to an encryption device for storing a crypto key and an associated check word of the crypto key for use by the encryption device.

2. Description of the Prior Art

The encryption device used for encrypting data to be transmitted to a ground station via a missile's telemetry system requires a crypto key to be loaded in the encryption device to permit the encryption of the data. The standard key loaders used by the military for crypto key loading are the KOI-18 and the KYK-13. The KOI-18 is a paper type reader that serially outputs the crypto key data and clock as a series of electrical pulses. The KYK-13 is an electrical device that can store up to three crypto keys with their corresponding check word. The KYK-13 outputs data in a manner similar to the KOI-18.

5 The missile's telemetry system encryption device includes a Non-Volatile Memory circuit which receives the crypto key and an associated check word from the key loader. Upon receiving the crypto key and check word the Non-Volatile Memory circuit will load the encryption device with the crypto key and check word and also display the status of a load. When power is removed from the encryption device, only the Non-Volatile Memory circuit will retain the key data including the crypto key. When power is re-applied to the encryption system, the Non-Volatile Memory circuit automatically reloads the encryption device with the key data. The crypto key will remain in the Non-Volatile Memory circuit until the crypto key is erased from the circuit.

10 While the Non-Volatile Memory circuits used in the past perform their intended function of key data storage adequately, these circuits generally require substantially more space than is currently available on today's state of the art missile encryption systems. There is now a need to significantly reduce the size of Non-Volatile Memory circuits used with a missile's telemetry system encryption device. There is also a need to provide a method whereby a Non-Volatile Memory circuit stores a crypto key and an associated check word which is to be loaded into an encryption device allowing the encryption device to encrypt

telemetry data for transmission to a ground station, a ship, an aircraft or other receiving station.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention overcomes some of the difficulties of the past including those mentioned above in that it comprises a highly effective and efficient method for storing a crypto key and an associated check word in a Non-Volatile Memory circuit which are then loaded into an encryption device allowing the encryption device to encrypt
10 telemetry data for transmission to a ground station, a ship, an aircraft or other receiving station.

15 The present invention comprises a method whereby a Non-Volatile Memory circuit operates as an interface between a key loader and an encryption device and stores therein a crypto key and an associated check word for use by the encryption device to encrypt telemetry data after a key load.

20 The method of the present invention includes the steps of storing a crypto key and an associated check word in the EEPROM of an 8-bit microcontroller and then duplicating the crypto key and the check word which is stored in a backup location of the EEPROM of the 8-bit microcontroller, and a step for indicating the status of a load of the crypto

key and check word in the microcontroller as well as a step for indicating the status of an erase of the crypto key and check word from the microcontroller. A pair of light emitting diodes connected to the microcontroller indicate the status of the load of the crypto key and check word within the microcontroller as well as the status of an erase of the crypto key and checkword from the microcontroller.

The method also includes the step of turning off the missile's transmitter when a key load occurs to prevent transmission of the crypto key and its corresponding check word. The method further includes a step for erasing the crypto key and its associated check word from an EEPROM within the microcontroller upon missile launch. This prevents an enemy force from retrieving the crypto key and its associated check word from the missile after launch.

The present invention also provides a step which allows the microcontroller to erase the crypto key and its associated checkword from its EEPROM upon receiving an active erase signal from the missile. The present invention further provides a step for supplying a master clock signal to the microcontroller. A 4 MHz clock signal generator supplies the master clock signal to the microcontroller.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating a missile's telemetry encryption system and external key loader;

FIG. 2 is a detailed electrical diagram of the Non-Volatile Memory circuit of FIG. 1 which comprises the present invention;

FIGS. 3A-3C illustrate timing and data waveforms associated with a data transfer between the key loader and the Non-Volatile Memory circuit of FIG. 1; and

FIGS. 4-9 depicts a flow chart for the software used by the 8-bit microcontroller of FIG. 2 to load a crypto key with its associated check word into the encryption device of FIG. 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to FIGS. 1 and 2, there is shown a missile's telemetry encryption system which includes a key loader 22 for loading a crypto key with its corresponding/associated check word into a Non-Volatile Memory circuit 20. The key loader 22 may be either a KOI-18 or a KYK-13 key loader. It should be noted that the KYK-13 key loader can store three crypto keys with their corresponding check words.

Non-Volatile Memory circuit 20 is connected to a KVG-68 encryption device 24 which allows Non-Volatile Memory

circuit 20 to load a crypto key with its corresponding check word into the encryption device 24. The encryption device 24 is connected to a telemeter transmitter 26 which transmits encrypted telemetry data from encryption device 24 to a ground station, a ship, an aircraft or other receiving station.

As shown in FIG. 2, Non-Volatile Memory circuit 20 includes an 18-pin Flash/EEPROM 8-bit microcontroller 32 which stores the crypto key and corresponding check word used by encryption device 24. The 18-pin Flash/EEPROM 8-bit microcontroller 32 used in the preferred embodiment of the present invention is a Model PIC16F84 microprocessor commercially available from Microchip Technology Inc. of Phoenix, Arizona. Connected to microcontroller 32 is a 4 MHz clock signal generator 34 which supplies the master clock signal to microcontroller 32.

Referring to FIGS. 1, 2 and 4, there is shown a power up circuit comprising a pair of resistors R10 and R11, a diode D2 and a capacitor C1. When power is first applied to microcontroller 32 upon powering up Non-Volatile Memory circuit 20 a logic zero is supplied to the /MCLR input of microcontroller 32 clearing microcontroller 32. This logic zero then transitions to a logic one which results in microcontroller 32 executing the main routine (FIG.4) of the

computer software program within microcontroller 32.

5 The main routine begins at program step 40, proceeding
to program step 42 which is the initialize_system routine
illustrated in FIG. 5. The initialize system routine sets
all of the port output signals of microcontroller 32 to
their initial condition (program step 60); initializes the
interrupts for microcontroller 32 (program step 62) and
initializes the test indicators which are LEDS 36 and 38
(program step 64). During program step 66 the EEPROM of
10 microcontroller 32 is scanned to determined if a valid
crypto key was previously loaded into the EEPROM of
microcontroller 32. If a valid key is detected an internal
flag is set which allows for a load of the key into
encryption device 24 by the computer software.

15 During initialization the /VAR_REQ output from
microcontroller 32 is set high since this signal is an
active low signal.

20 At this time it should be noted that the computer
software program for microcontroller 32 is adapted for
processing two KGV-68 encryption units although only one is
illustrated in FIG. 1. In a security upgrade configuration
the software operates in a manner which allows two KGV-68
encryption units to be loaded with a crypto key and its
corresponding check word. It should be noted that while

FIG. 1 only shows one KVG-68, the non-volatile memory comprising the present invention may be easily modified to accommodate two KVG-68 encryption units.

After initialization the ERASE output from
 5 microcontroller 32 is set high since this signal is an
 active low signal. This turns off LED 38. After
 initialization the STATUS output from microcontroller 32 is
 also set high since this signal is an active low signal.
 This turns off LED 36. During initialization of
 10 microcontroller 32 the ERASE output and STATUS output from
 microcontroller 32 are pulsed to test the operation of Leds
 36 and 38. Setting the ERASE output of microcontroller 32
 high indicates that the crypto key has not been erased from
 microcontroller 32. Setting the STATUS output of
 15 microcontroller 32 high indicates that encryption device 24
 is not loaded.

The XMTR_DISABLE output from microcontroller 32 is set
 high during initialization to disable transmitter 26.
 The ENCR_SENSE_IN output from microcontroller 32 is set low
 20 during initialization indicating that the KVG-68 encryption
 device 24 is not being loaded. The ENCR_FCLK and ENCR_FDATA
 outputs from microcontroller 32 are set high during
 initialization. The clock signal provided by
 microcontroller 32 at the ENCR_FCLK output from

microcontroller 32 has an active falling edge necessitating that the signal be set high during initialization of microcontroller 32. Setting the ENCR_FDATA output from microcontroller 32 high results in "0" at the ENCR_FDATA output of microcontroller 32.

Referring to FIGS. 1, 2, 4 and 6, during program step 44, the computer software test for the presence of key loader 22. The SENSE_IN line is monitored by microcontroller 32 to determine the presence of key loader 22. When the SENSE_IN line is high resulting in a "1" at the RA0 input of microcontroller 32, the computer software proceeds to the eeprom_key_load routine of FIG. 6.

During program step 70 transmitter 26 is disabled by microcontroller 32 to prevent possible transmission of the crypto key. During program step 72 the /VAR_REQ output from microcontroller 32 is set low to request the check word from key loader 22. During program step 74 the check word is loaded into the EEPROM of microcontroller 32. Program step 78 waits for an indication that the crypto key will be transferred from key loader 22 to the EEPROM of microcontroller 32 with the crypto key being loaded into the EEPROM of microcontroller 32 during program step 82. Microcontroller 32 and the computer software also duplicate the crypto key and check word in a backup location in the

EEPROM of microcontroller 32.

During program step 84 an indication is provided that the key is present by clearing the ERASE LED 36 turning off the ERASE LED 36. During program step 86, transmitter 26 is enabled by microcontroller 32. During program step 46, the computer software returns to the main program of FIG. 4.

During program step 48, the computer software checks for the presence of the crypto key. If the crypto key is not present, i.e. the key is not accurately read into microcontroller 32, the software returns to program step 44 to determine if the key loader 22 is present. When key loader 22 is present, the computer software will again load the crypto key.

When the crypto key is correctly loaded into microcontroller 32, the computer software proceeds to program step 50 which is the KGV load attempt decision. When a decision is made to load encryption unit 24, the computer software proceeds to the routine kgv_key_load of FIG. 7 (program step 52). During program step 90, transmitter 26 is disabled.

During program step 92 the KGV sense input (ENCR_SENSE_IN) is set active, i.e. the logic "one" state, to start a load of the crypto key with its corresponding check word. Encryption unit 24 then responds with an

active low variable request signal (/ENCR_VAR_RQ) to microcontroller 32 (program step 94). During program step 96, there is a set up for the start of the key load interrupt within microcontroller 32. During program step 98 an internal timer within microcontroller 32 is initialized and the key load interrupt is enabled for the key loading process.

During program step 100 there is an indication within microcontroller 32 that the key should be present. During program step 102 a wait routine occurs which allows for completion of the key load process. When the key load process is complete, which is an internal indication from the interrupt routine, the KGV sense input (ENCR_SENSE_IN) is set inactive, i.e. a logic "zero" state (program step 104).

During program step 106, the computer software increments the count to keep track of the key load attempts. During program step 108 the computer software sets a flag to use the backup key on the next attempt. A second crypto key with its corresponding check word are stored in the EEPROM of microcontroller 32. This backup key is utilized in the event that the primary key is not functional. Loading of the backup crypto key in the KVG-68 encryption device 24 is determined by acceptance or non-

acceptance of the primary crypto key by encryption device 24.

During program step 110, the computer software determines whether the key is loaded by testing random compare input (/ENCR_RAN_CP) to microcontroller 32. The answer will be no since there is a requirement that the routine kgv_key_load of FIG. 7 be processed twice to load the crypto key and the check word into encryption device 24.

At this time it should be noted that the check word is loaded first followed by the crypto key. During program step 112 the computer software determines whether there has been more than three attempts to load the check word and the crypto key, which equates to six loops of the routine kgv_key_load of FIG. 7. If the answer is "yes" then transmitter 26 is enabled during program step 114. When this occurs the light emitting diode 36 will blink (program step 116) to indicate that microcontroller 32 has been unsuccessful in its attempt to load encryption device 24.

When a load of encryption device 24 is successful light emitting diode 36 remains on (program step 116). During program step 118, the computer software sets an internal flag indicating that a key load has been attempted. This prevents an inadvertent return to the routine kgv_key_load of FIG. 7.

The computer software next returns to main routine of FIG. 4. During program step 54, a determination is made as to whether or not the key should be erased. When the ERASE input to microcontroller 32 is high (RA4 input to microcontroller 32), the microcontroller 32 erases the check word and the crypto key as well as its backup from the EEPROM within microcontroller 32. Five random writes are performed within the EEPROM within microcontroller 32. This logic one signal, i.e. ERASE signal is provided by the loader interface 28 or the missile interface 30 to the RA4 input of microcontroller 32. The signal provided by the missile interface 30 is substantially higher than digital logic levels necessitating the use of additional resistor R9 in the LAUNCH line connecting missile interface 30 to microcontroller 32.

Referring to FIG. 8, the routine for erasing the EEPROM within microcontroller 32 is erase_key. Program step 120 debounces the erase indication signal provided to the RA4 input to microcontroller 32. Whenever the signal provided to the RA4 input to microcontroller 32 is a logic "one", the computer software proceeds to program step 124 erasing the crypto key with its corresponding check word from the EEPROM within microcontroller 32. The erase light, i.e. light emitting diode 38 is set, and the load status is displayed

during program step 124.

From the foregoing, it may readily be seen that the present invention comprises a new, unique and exceedingly useful method which uses a non-volatile memory to store a crypto key and a check word for an encryption device which constitutes a considerable improvement over the known prior art. Many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. It is to be understood that within the scope of the appended claims the invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described.